

The preparation of the manuscript of this notable book was the chief labor of Dr. Rydberg during the closing years of his life and was continued by him even during his last illness until a few days before his death. While much of it was then in type, other parts were still in unedited manuscript, and the task of finishing the work then devolved on Dr. M. A. Howe, who toiled unremittingly to complete it. To the hundreds of botanists who knew and loved the kindly author, the book will always stand as a monument to an energetic life wholly devoted to the advancement of botanical science.

H. A. GLEASON

The cult of the fantastic clan*

The desert empire of America is no longer the last outpost of greed, gold and desolation. The mystery and terror of it no one can forget who reads Raphael Pumpelly's *Reminiscences*, or drives across the stark Mojave in the dark. And gold still glitters in the pages of J. Frank Dobie's recently issued *Coronado's Children*.

But that this desert has a sort of wild beauty, that its plants were of fantastic shapes and still more fantastic habits, is a comparatively new cult. A few experts, of course, have long known this. The Carnegie Institution at Tucson and Britton and Rose's *Cactaceae* are the two best evidences of the importance of the study of desert plant problems. But only recently have cacti been anything but wierd desert plants to the general public.

California seems to have been the first to quicken public interest in them. They started in Los Angeles the Cactus and Succulent Society, which already has a large membership and publishes a journal. Last March we reviewed here Shreve's *The Cactus and its Home*. And two other publishers now came forward with two more books on the cacti of the southwest.

Thornber and Bonker's *The Fantastic Clan* is the more comprehensive of two, but the least practical on the score of cultivation. Its botanical accuracy was assured by Dr. Thornber's col-

* Schulz, E. D. Cactus culture. Pp. 1-157, Figs. 1-28. Orange Judd Co. N. Y. 1932. Price \$2.00.

Thornber, J. J. and Bonker, Frances. *The Fantastic Clan: the cactus family*. Pp. 1-194, Figs. 1-51 and three colored plates. Macmillan Co. N. Y. 1932. Price \$3.50.

laboration, and it is to be assumed that the descriptions of desert trips in search of cacti are by Frances Bonker. Together they have produced a very readable, authoritative volume. It catches the lure of desert beauty, the limitless desolation, the heat and the marvellous awakening of cactus color that comes with certain seasons. And its descriptions of species, while accurate, are in non-technical language.

For the general reader and casual traveller no better book on the cacti of the southwest could be written than *The Fantastic Clan*. But upon the cultivation of them by far the best book is the Orange Judd publication called *Cactus Culture* by Ellen D. Schulz, who is the director of the Witte Memorial Museum at San Antonio.

The cultivation of cacti is very much on the increase. There are many dealers in these plants, and the Santa Barbara Garden Tours Committee recently issued a list of 387 species cultivated in their vicinity. In many parts of the nearly frost-free southwest growing cacti may be easy enough. But in areas of too much moisture or too much cold their cultivation is apt to be difficult.

The author of *Cactus Culture* had both audiences in mind. Her practical thoroughness is obvious in her account of watering, propagation, pests, insects, and all the pitfalls of cactus culture. And she has many useful hints on the making of artistic cactus gardens, of which she manages one at the San Antonio Museum.

The cult of the fantastic clan is growing faster than most easterners realize. Until a year or so ago there was almost no popular literature on cacti, but within six months three books have appeared. Both of the volumes here noticed are well illustrated, particularly *The Fantastic Clan* which, besides many half-tones and line cuts, has three beautifully colored plates. Both books are indexed and each of them admirably fits the niche for which it was written.

NORMAN TAYLOR

**A. J. Grout. Moss Flora of North America North of Mexico.
Vol. III. Part 2. 1931.**

This second part of Dr. Grout's Moss flora deals with what the author calls the subfamily *Amblystegieae* of the family *Hydnaceae*, perhaps better regarded as a separate family *Amblystegiaceae*, as in the second edition of Engler & Prantl.